

Environmental Management - Grand Junction Office



Moab UMTRA Project Public Participation Plan

Revision 1

January 2009



U.S. Department
of Energy

Office of Environmental Management

**Moab UMTRA Project
Public Participation Plan**

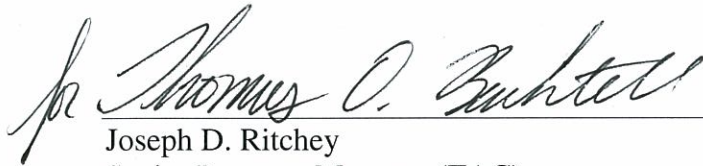
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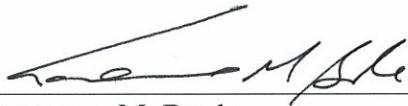
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Review and Approval

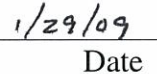


Joseph D. Ritchey
Senior Program Manager (TAC)


Date



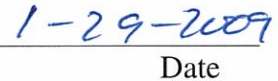
Lawrence M. Brede
Deputy Project Manager (RAC)


Date

Accepted by:



Donald R. Metzler
Moab Federal Project Director


Date

Revision History

Revision No.	Date	Reason/Basis for Revision
0	January 2008	Initial issue of plan.
1	January 2009	Annual update to plan.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

DOE	U.S. Department of Energy
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
NRC	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
RAC	Remedial Action Contract or Contractor
TAC	Technical Assistance Contract or Contractor
UMTRA	Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action
UMTRCA	Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this *Public Participation Plan* (DOE-EM/GJ1542) is to provide information on the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) public participation policy and to identify communication methods to enhance public participation in the Moab Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action (UMTRA) Project decision-making process. This plan will be updated annually or as needed.

DOE regulations and policy mandate public involvement in decision making. Public participation provides DOE with the opportunity to gather opinions, perspectives, and values from the public and enables it to make better, more informed decisions. DOE must also comply with additional guidance on public participation provided in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), in the Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act (UMTRCA), Title 40 *Code of Federal Regulations* Parts 1500–1508, and in other federal and state agency requirements as they pertain to such items as permits and notifications.

Certain core values are associated with the DOE public participation policy. These include:

- Accessibility—DOE employees who are available, approachable, and open to the public.
- Fairness—objectivity and freedom from bias toward any side.
- Innovation—introducing new ideas, methods, and approaches associated with communication methods or remediation technologies.
- Peer review—examination of key issues and decisions by internal and external peers.
- Credibility—commitment to pursue sound and dependable science and technology.
- Timeliness—allowing sufficient time for stakeholders to participate in DOE decision-making processes, timely responses to stakeholder comments and requests, and timely DOE decision-making processes supported by public participation.

2.0 Site Description

The Moab site (formerly known as the Atlas millsite) is a former uranium-ore processing facility located about 3 miles northwest of the city of Moab in Grand County, Utah (Figures 1 and 2), and lies on the west bank of the Colorado River at the confluence with Moab Wash. Figure 1 shows the general location of the Moab site and the Crescent Junction disposal site (also in Utah) relative to the city of Moab and other geographical locations. Figure 2 provides a 2005 aerial view of the Moab site.

The site is irregularly shaped and encompasses approximately 400 acres; a 130-acre uranium mill tailings pile occupies much of the western portion. Steep sandstone cliffs border the site on the north and southwest. The Colorado River forms the southeastern boundary of the site. U.S. Highway 191 parallels the northern site boundary, and State Highway 279 crosses the western portion of the site. The entrance to Arches National Park is located less than 1 mile northwest of the site across U.S. Highway 191; Canyonlands National Park is about 12 miles to the southwest. The Union Pacific Railroad traverses a small section of the site just west of State Route 279, then enters a tunnel and emerges several miles to the southwest. Moab Wash

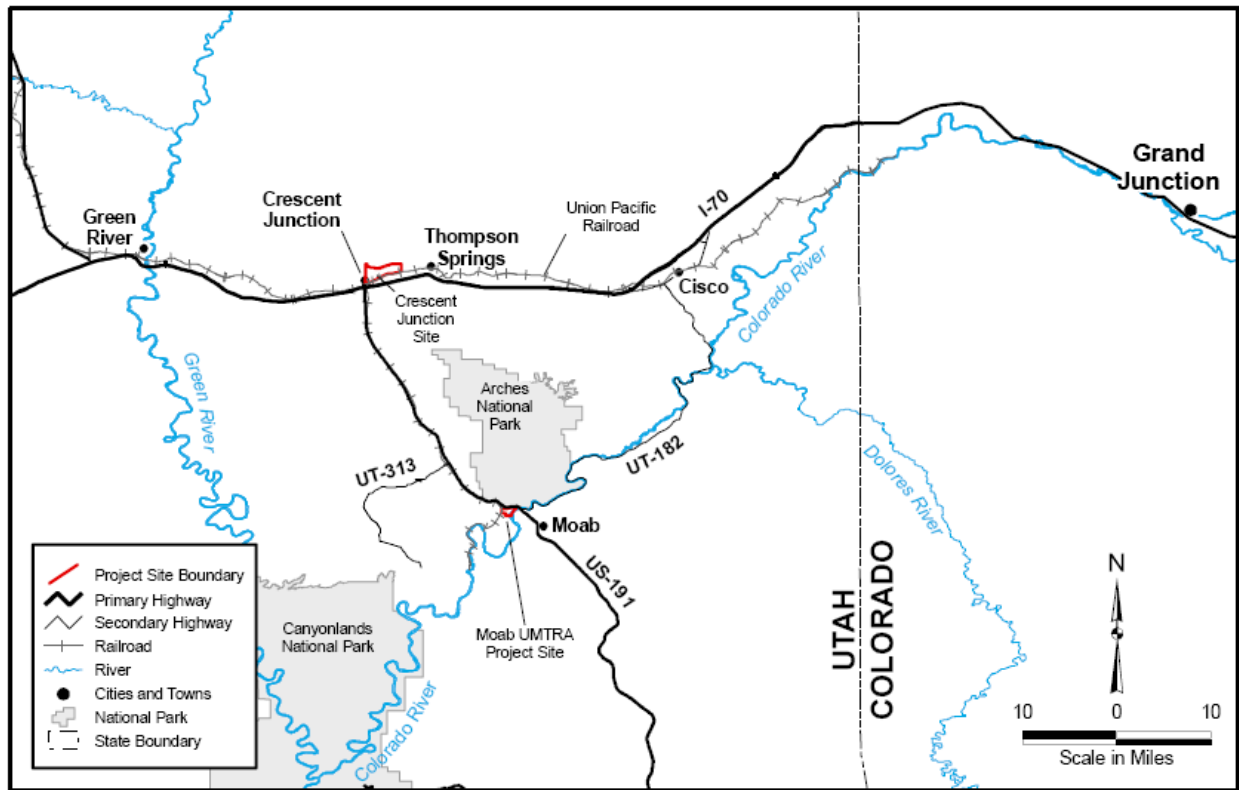


Figure 1. Location of Moab Site and Crescent Junction Disposal Site

runs northwest to southeast through the center of the site and joins with the Colorado River. The wash is an intermittent stream that flows only after significant precipitation or snowmelt. The Moab site lies directly across the Colorado River from the Scott M. Matheson Wetlands Preserve. This area consists of marsh and riparian habitat, including dense growth of tamarisk, a shrubby tree that thrives along waterways in drier climates.

3.0 Background

The Moab site was subject to Title II of UMTRCA because it was an active uranium processing site when the legislation was passed and it was regulated under a U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) license. With the enactment of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001, Congress designated the site as an UMTRCA Title I site for remediation by DOE. On October 25, 2001, DOE assumed ownership of the Moab site. The DOE Environmental Management office in Grand Junction, Colorado, is responsible for reclamation and stewardship of the site.

DOE developed an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to fulfill the NEPA requirement of considering the full range of reasonable alternatives and associated environmental effects of significant federal actions. In compliance with requirements, DOE actively solicited public participation in its decisions that could affect the quality of human health and the environment. Twelve federal, state, local, and tribal agencies assisted DOE as cooperating agencies in the EIS

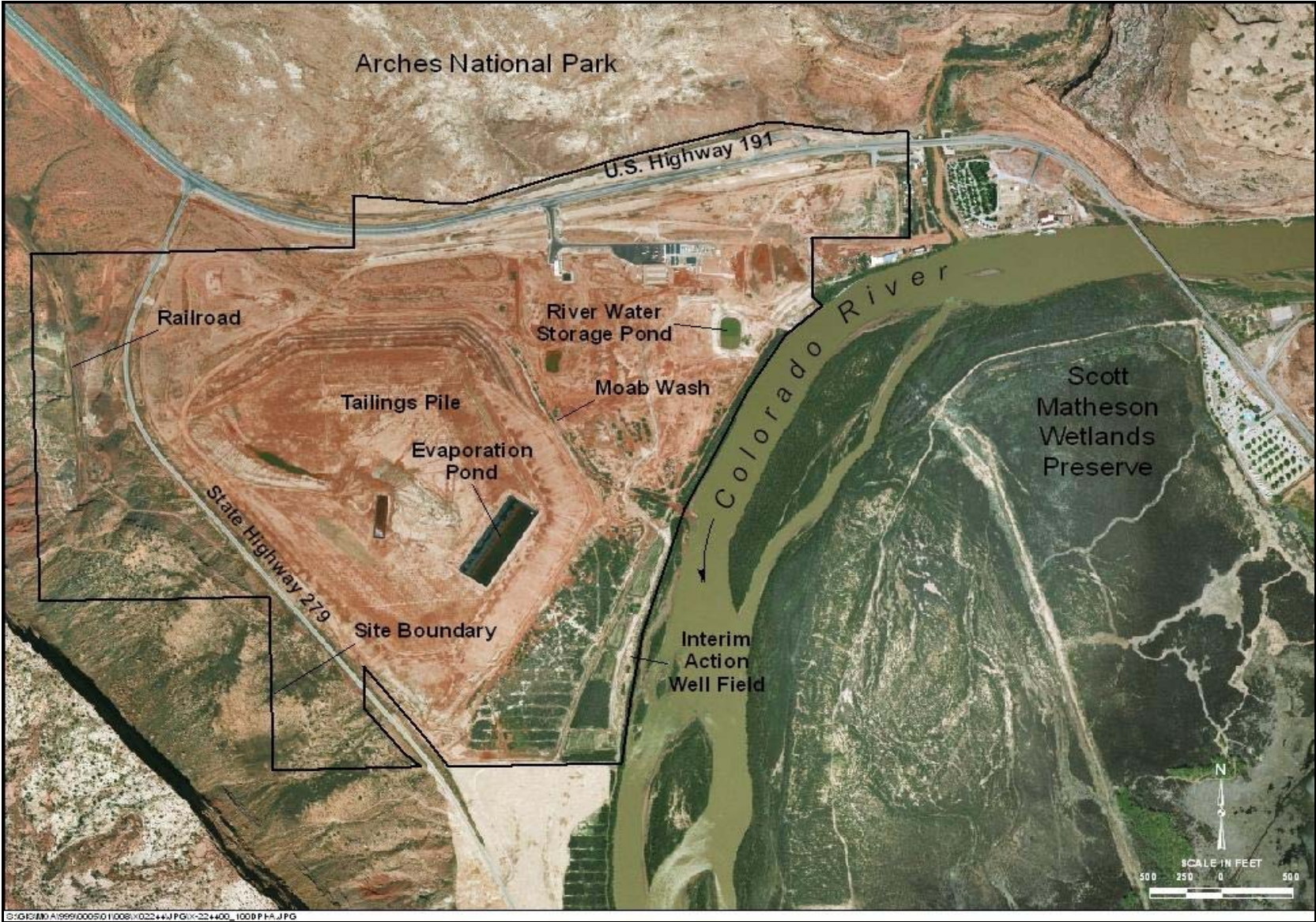


Figure 2. February 2005 Aerial View of the Moab Site

process of identifying all reasonable alternatives and significant environmental, social, and economic impacts associated with the proposed actions.

In July 2005, DOE published the final EIS that presented the preferred alternatives of active ground water remediation and off-site disposal of the tailings pile and other contaminated materials at the proposed Crescent Junction disposal site using predominantly rail transportation. The preferred alternatives included cleanup and reclamation of the millsite property and certain off-site properties known as vicinity properties. DOE issued the Record of Decision in September 2005, which detailed the selection of the preferred alternatives and the basis for that decision.

DOE awarded two new contracts for the project in June 2007: the Remedial Action Contract (RAC) was awarded to EnergySolutions Federal Services, Inc., and the Technical Assistance Contract (TAC) was awarded to S&K Aerospace, Inc. The RAC is responsible for finalizing the design for how to move the tailings to Crescent Junction, developing that tailings-removal system, building the initial portion of the disposal cell, beginning transport of the tailings, and handling day-to-day maintenance and operations at the Moab and Crescent Junction sites. The TAC provides technical and administrative support services to DOE, continues the ground water interim remedial action efforts, and conducts radiological surveys of vicinity properties.

4.0 Area Profile

The following information about the Moab community and Grand County was compiled from the Utah Department of Workforce Services' and Bureau of Economic Analysis' websites and is the most current available.

Moab is the Grand County government seat and the principal city of southeastern Utah. Southeastern Utah has the nation's largest concentration of national and state parks, monuments, and recreation areas. Within a 100-mile radius of Moab are four national parks, four state parks, and numerous national monuments and national historic sites. The population of Moab in 2007 was estimated at 4,868.

In addition to Moab, the communities of Crescent Junction and Thompson Springs, which are also in Grand County, will be affected by the relocation of the mill tailings to the Crescent Junction site for permanent disposal.

Agriculture and mining were the major economic activities during much of the area's history. The uranium boom in the 1950s brought the first real population expansion to the area. In recent years, Grand County has shifted its focus to tourism as the major economic base. The region has become noted for mountain biking, rock climbing, jeeping, four-wheeling, and whitewater rafting on the Colorado River. Annually, more than 1 million people visit Grand County for recreation.

Leisure and hospitality industries account for approximately 33 percent of Grand County's employment, government accounts for 18 percent, and trade, transportation, and utilities account

for 18 percent. The county hospital, grocery store chain, local government, school district, and National Park Service are also among the major employers.

In 2008, the population of Grand County was estimated at 9,326. The county per capita income in 2006 was \$26,983, which is below the state average per capita income of \$29,300. Grand County's 2007 civilian labor force was 5,212, and the unemployment rate was 4.8 percent.

Media in the area consist of one private and one public radio station, one weekly newspaper, and a local television station that presents local, national, and world news. Regional, national, and international newspapers are readily available.

5.0 Stakeholders

DOE recognizes that stakeholders may be any affected or interested party, including:

- Citizens of Grand County and the city of Green River, Utah.
- Native American tribes.
- Local media.
- Local elementary and secondary schools.
- Local city and county governments.
- State governmental agencies.
- Elected State of Utah officials.
- Federal agencies.
- Congressional delegations.
- Environmental organizations.
- Business owners.
- Service organizations.
- General public using U.S. Highway 191 traveling into and through the city of Moab.
- Other interested individuals.

6.0 Issues and Concerns

Since DOE assumed ownership of the Moab site, local citizens, environmental groups and agencies, and downstream users of water from the Colorado River have expressed various concerns associated with the Moab Project, such as potential health effects of the contaminants, including air and water quality; dust control; future land use; general aesthetics associated with the site activities being observable from U.S. Highway 191; transportation issues; and positive and negative economic impacts to the Moab and Crescent Junction areas.

Over the past several years, an issue raised by county officials and congressional representatives is the continued funding of the Moab Project at a level that will allow the project to continue to move forward and ensure that the tailings will be relocated in a timely manner. In early 2008, DOE reevaluated options for transporting the tailings in the safest and most expeditious manner. In August 2008, after considering public input, DOE reaffirmed its decision to use rail as the primary method to transport the tailings.

7.0 Public Participation Activities

The following public participation activities will be conducted in support of the DOE goal of actively informing the public about the Moab Project to provide opportunities for communication between DOE and the public.

7.1 Public Meetings

Public meetings will be held as circumstances dictate to address issues of importance to stakeholders. These meetings will provide information about the project and will seek comments from attendees. DOE will provide sufficient advance notice of the date, time, and location of meetings so that interested stakeholders can plan to attend.

7.2 Public Availability Sessions

Public availability sessions are opportunities for interested stakeholders to meet with project personnel in an informal setting. These sessions are held to identify and answer stakeholder concerns and may be held in lieu of public meetings to allow for more informal discussions about the project.

7.3 Small Group Meetings

Stakeholders may request DOE staff to meet with small groups. These meetings provide opportunities to address specific concerns or issues. For example, the Moab Tailings Project Steering Committee was established through Grand County and meets regularly to discuss the project. This committee is independent from DOE; DOE and its contractors attend and participate in this committee's meetings by invitation only. The Federal Project Director also periodically meets with senior citizens at the Grand Center to hear their thoughts on the project.

7.4 Briefings for Local Officials

DOE Moab Project staff will meet with Grand County Council and City of Moab officials to provide a status of the project or as issues arise.

7.5 Newsletter, Fact Sheets, and Information Updates

In March 2006, DOE began periodically publishing a newsletter for the project titled *Tailings Times*. DOE also prepares fact sheets and other short, formal documents for public distribution to provide project updates and to describe technical and informational components of the project.

7.6 News Releases

DOE will issue news releases to announce public meetings, provide information on project activities, and announce other newsworthy events. News releases will be distributed to identified news media and other stakeholders and will be posted on the DOE Moab Project website (see section 7.9).

7.7 Display Ads/Articles

Display ads will be prepared, as needed, and placed in local print media to announce public meetings and other special events. Periodically, a status update article may be submitted to the local print media.

7.8 Kiosks

A kiosk is located near the Moab site at the Courthouse Wash parking lot off U.S. Highway 191 to provide information about the project to passersby. Another kiosk will be installed near the Crescent Junction site. The panels contain background information about the site, current project activities, and project contacts.

7.9 Internet Website

Selected project documents, fact sheets, information updates, technical summaries, meeting announcements, and news releases are posted to the DOE Moab Project website. The website address is www.gjem.energy.gov/moab.

7.10 Email Address

DOE established an email address to receive comments or to request project documents. The address is moabcomments@gjem.doe.gov. The project team responds to email messages received at this site.

7.11 Toll-Free Hotline

A toll-free Moab Project hotline was established for the convenience of stakeholders. The number is 1-800-637-4575. The hotline includes options to leave a message for the project, listen to employment opportunities, or request a document.

7.12 Public Reading Room

DOE maintains a public reading room, which contains documents and information related to the Moab Project. The reading room is at the following location:

Grand County Library
257 East Center Street
Moab, Utah
435-259-1111

Library hours:
9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturday
Closed Sunday

The official project record is located at the DOE Environmental Management Grand Junction Office, 200 Grand Avenue, Suite 500, Grand Junction, Colorado, 81501.

7.13 Educational Programs and Outreach Activities

DOE is committed to supporting educational initiatives designed to enhance curriculum in schools and will coordinate educational partnerships with local schools as appropriate. In addition, the Moab Project team will support and participate in educational outreach activities, such as environmental fairs, science fairs, and career days.

7.14 Speakers Bureau

A cadre of speakers with varying levels and areas of expertise are employed on the Moab Project. Speakers will be available to participate in community and educational activities. Arrangements for speakers are made by contacting Wendee Ryan, contractor Public Affairs Manager, at 970-257-2145.

7.15 Local Offices

The Moab site administrative office hours are 6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Site security is maintained 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. The Crescent Junction site administrative office hours are 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Friday.

7.16 Information Contacts

The DOE Moab Federal Project Director is the primary information contact for public inquiries regarding Moab Project activities:

Donald R. Metzler
Moab Federal Project Director
U.S. Department of Energy
200 Grand Avenue, Suite 500
Grand Junction, CO 81501
970-257-2115
970-257-2175 (fax)

E-mail: moabcomments@gjem.doe.gov
Toll-free hotline: 1-800-637-4575

7.17 Emergency Notifications

In the event of an emergency or an incident involving the Moab Project that could affect the nearby community, public notifications will be made consistent with the *Moab UMTRA Project Emergency Response Plan* (DOE-EM/GJ1520).

8.0 Historical Highlights

- 1956 Uranium Reduction Company begins operating Moab mill, which is regulated by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission as directed by the Atomic Energy Act of 1954.
- 1962 Atlas Minerals Corporation acquires the site.
- 1974 Process circuits are modified to reduce the amount of water used for milling.
- 1978 UMTRCA amends the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 and mandates cleanup of potentially hazardous uranium mill tailings to provide stricter controls on future handling and disposal of wastes from the processing of uranium ore.
- 1979 Atlas' license is renewed with NRC.
- 1984 Moab mill ceases operation under License SUA-917.
- 1988 Decommissioning begins; significant Reclamation Plan revisions include a ground water detection monitoring program and dewatering of the mill tailings pile.
- 1989 Construction of an interim cover over the tailings pile begins.
- 1992 Revised Atlas Reclamation Plan indicates that mill decommissioning will be initiated to remove structures.
- 1993 Environmental Assessment for the Moab site published in the *Federal Register* proposes selected revisions to the Atlas Reclamation Plan. Extensive adverse public comment is received; NRC decides to reevaluate the entire plan.
- 1994 NRC decides to prepare an EIS to evaluate the Reclamation Plan (*Federal Register* notice March 30, 1994).
- 1995 Placement of interim cover over the tailings pile is completed.
- 1995 NRC consults with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and submits an initial Biological Assessment.
- 1996 Decommissioning of mill structures is completed.
- 1996 NRC releases the draft EIS.
- 1996 NRC holds a public meeting for the draft EIS and Technical Evaluation Report in February in Moab.
- 1997 NRC submits a supplement to the initial Biological Assessment to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- 1997 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issues its first draft Biological Opinion; identifies moving the tailing pile as "a reasonable and prudent alternative."
- 1998 Atlas Minerals Corporation files for bankruptcy. Proposed reclamation activities as a Title II site are administered by PriceWaterhouseCoopers, a trustee appointed by NRC.
- 1998 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issues a revised draft and a final Biological Opinion stating that the Ground Water Corrective Action Plan must be revisited and expedited.
- 1999 NRC completes the final EIS on the decision to stabilize mill tailings in place.
- 2000 Moab site is designated as a Title I site under UMTRCA with the passage of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act.
- 2001 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service withdraws its final Biological Opinion.
- 2001 DOE assumes ownership of the site on October 1; the NRC license is terminated, and the DOE Environmental Management Grand Junction office in Colorado is assigned responsibility for reclamation and stewardship of the site.
- 2001 DOE Moab Project team develops the *Preliminary Plan for Remediation*, which is transmitted by the Assistant Secretary of Environmental Management to the National Academy of Sciences for review.

- 2001 DOE hosts a public meeting in Moab in December to provide a status update on activities at the site.
- 2002 National Academy of Sciences provides comments on the *Preliminary Plan for Remediation* to the Secretary of Energy and hosts a public meeting in June to summarize its comments.
- 2002 DOE initiates NEPA process with publication in the *Federal Register* of the Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (67 FR 77969, December 20, 2002).
- 2003 DOE conducts six public scoping meetings in January to solicit public comment on the cleanup alternatives for remediation of the Moab site and vicinity properties.
- 2003 Public scoping comment period ends on February 14.
- 2003 DOE conducts three public information meetings in June to provide a status of the EIS.
- 2003 DOE issues the Site Observational Work Plan in December to present the technical information necessary to allow selection of a ground water compliance strategy.
- 2004 DOE releases its draft EIS in November assessing potential environmental impacts of proposed actions to remediate the tailings and ground water at the Moab site and vicinity properties.
- 2005 DOE hosts public hearings in January to provide a forum for comments on the draft EIS.
- 2005 Formal public comment period ends on February 18.
- 2005 DOE issues final EIS in July.
- 2005 DOE issues Record of Decision on September 14.
- 2005 DOE conducts two public meetings in October on the status of the Moab Project and the next steps toward relocating the tailings pile.
- 2005 DOE conducts two public meetings in December on the environmental air monitoring program for the project.
- 2006 DOE begins publishing a project newsletter titled *Tailings Times* periodically to keep stakeholders informed of project activities.
- 2007 DOE awards a RAC and a TAC on June 20.
- 2007 DOE hosts an open house in August at the Moab site to introduce the new contractors to the community.
- 2008 DOE holds public meeting in June to discuss and get public input on options for transporting the mill tailings to Crescent Junction.
- 2008 DOE submits Report to Congress in July that provides annual funding needed to complete the project by 2019.
- 2008 DOE receives NRC conditional concurrence of its final Remedial Action Plan in July.
- 2008 DOE reaffirms its decision in August to transport the tailings primarily by rail.
- 2008 DOE conducts public meeting in October to provide a transportation update.

9.0 References

40 *Code of Federal Regulations* 1500-1508, Council on Environmental Quality's Regulations for Implementing NEPA.

DOE *Moab UMTRA Project Emergency Response Plan* (DOE-EM/GJ1520), Revision 3, U.S. Department of Energy, Grand Junction, Colorado, January 2009.